



# **CUPE Ontario** **Bargaining Conference**

*March 11, 2009*

## ***Executive Summary***

### **Coordinated Bargaining: Stemming the Tide, Opening the Floodgates**

**A Discussion Paper by Alan Hall, Director, Labour Studies, University of Windsor**

**For CUPE Ontario's Convention on Coordinated Bargaining, March 12-14 2009**

- ❖ The aim of coordinated bargaining is to make gains and ensure that wages and work conditions do not decline because different groups of employees are forced to compete against each other.
- ❖ Free market policies mean that employers band together to attempt to force workers to agree to the lowest possible wages and the poorest working conditions. Cross-bargaining unit collectivity is needed to challenge privatization and contracting out.
- ❖ Given free market policies of the Ontario Liberal government, we need to strengthen our bargaining power. Coordination means more workers at the table at any given round negotiation. It means more clout for us in negotiations.
- ❖ We need to create solidarity within and across bargaining units and within and across locals.
- ❖ Keeping members informed through different communication tools is critical for creating solidarity throughout negotiations.
- ❖ This kind of effective communication will mean that coordinated bargaining is good for union renewal.
- ❖ Governments and employers will use the economic crisis as an opportunity to push against the gains made in collective bargaining. Unions can also use the economic crisis as a reason for stakeholders (members, public sector employers and the public) to push back against the free market and deregulation policies that brought on the financial crisis in the first place.
- ❖ Coordination often starts with information sharing, move to coordinating bargaining proposals and to full coordinated strategies: it is critical to establish clear rules, procedures and structures of coordination and compliance.